

**David Gamble,
Service User Engagement Co ordinator.**

**Leicestershire & Rutland Probation
Trust.**

**Development of ex-offenders
volunteering in this sector.**

**Some views on the process, challenges
and benefits.**



Training is provided on topics such as.

The Role and organisational workings of the service.

Background of the criminal justice system.

Basic care and counselling skills.

Diversity.

Relevant operational matters such as health and safety.



Working with individuals and families.

Befriending and one to one mentoring,

Assisting in job or training searches

Accessing services.

Development of social skills.

Working in the group setting. Helping to organise and staff the running of groups.



The Criminal Justice Drugs Team

**In house Drug and Alcohol
Treatment for Leicestershire
Probation.**



**Since 2007 more focused on involving
service users
through consultation and focus groups.**

**Since 2008 creation of Service User
Engagement Co ordinator role.**

**2009, formalising Peer Mentoring
Scheme.**



Modules of training (phase 1)

Boundaries, Confidentiality and Diversity

Communication Skills

Motivating and Supporting Others

Handling Difficult Situations

Giving Advice

Reviewed our volunteer strategy and our policy on employing ex-offenders, making it more flexible and on a case by case basis.

We now have built into our volunteer strategy a clear progression route of service user to peer mentor to volunteer

Some challenges.

CRB Checks

Retention

Accreditation of training.

Appetite for knowledge



The CJDT Continuous Professional Development Training

Mainstream Probation Training

**Monthly Senior Peer Mentor
Development Training**

Studying at Degree Level

PTLLS (Teacher Training)

Who benefits from Peer Mentoring

Staff benefits

Assistance to staff and co deliver groups.
Vital feedback.
Boosts Morale

Service User Benefits

Brings therapeutic value to
treatment.
Being inspired to change.

BATTLE: FORMER PROLIFIC CRIMINAL SAYS SORRY BY MENTORING FORMER INMATES

Ex-offender helps to cut crime

At the height of his addiction to drugs, Cliff Freeman was committing crimes to pay for his £750-a-day crack-cocaine and heroin habit.

Now, free of his addiction and with 10 prison sentences to his name, the 44-year-old spoke frankly about his criminal lifestyle as a new bid was launched to cut re-offending rates among county criminals.

Mr Freeman, from New Parks, Leicester, appeared before the courts on almost 100 occasions for offences ranging from shoplifting and burglary to robbery and drug dealing.

Only the intervention of the courts and probation officials and a drug treatment programme put him on the road to recovery.

Now working as a volunteer mentor to young offenders, he said: "I did not consider the consequences of my actions on the victims whose property I stole.

"That just never enters your head when you have a drug habit.

"It was only when I went through the recovery programme and came out the other side that I came to feel regret and remorse for what I'd done.

"I have a chance now to say sorry and hopefully give

by **CIARAN FAGAN**
SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

something back to society and to the police, because I was a right headache for them too."

Mr Freeman, who grew up in children's homes, said: "I was going out every day to commit crime. Prison became an occupational hazard."

Now settled with his partner of 12 years and a young son, his aim is to find a full-time job, ideally linked to the voluntary work he is currently doing with offenders.

He said: "The mentoring work I do is very important to me.

SENTENCES

"They can see what I'm doing now and how I have stopped taking drugs and committing crimes. They are thinking 'if he can do it, so can I'."

The new campaign aims to reduce re-offending rates among the 500 to 600 adults a year in Leicestershire who serve sentences of less than a year.

Traditionally, people over 21 are not given access to a probation officer when they are released from sentences of less than 12 months.

Research has shown that about 60 per cent of those prisoners re-offend within a year of release.

However, the re-offending rate for prisoners who had



PICTURE: WILL JOHNSTON / 21251

REFORMED: Cliff Freeman, a former drug addict who turned to crime to pay for his habit, is now mentoring young offenders

served more than 12 months and had consequently been under the supervision of a probation officer, is about 38 per cent.

The new campaign, called Turnabout, is funded by police, the probation service and Leicestershire Community Safety Partnership.

Trevor Worsfold, acting chief executive of Leicestershire and Rutland Probation Trust, said police, probation and other organisations would work together to supervise prisoners thought to be the most likely to re-offend.

Action will include helping

them overcome drug or alcohol addiction.

Chief Superintendent Rob Nixon, head of city police, said: "Focusing on the critical few who cause significant harm and sharing information ensures we can swiftly respond to risk, make productive use of

our time and make it harder for those who play the system to continue offending."

The £200,000 scheme was launched yesterday at Leicester Tigers stadium.

It is being run as a pilot project and will be evaluated by the Government.

Benefits for the Peer Mentor

Opportunity to give something back.

Learn and develop transferable skills.

Gains in Confidence and Self Esteem.

Work Experience.

Encourages Learning.

Rewarding feelings of helping others.

Cliffs partner Bev is also Peer Mentoring



“Something to give. People who feel and show concern and empathy for others are more likely to desist from crime. Offenders who find ways to contribute to society, their community, or their families, appear to be more successful at giving up crime. For instance, the opportunity to mentor, assist or enhance the life of other people. If these achievements are formally recognised, the effect may be even stronger.”

Rehabilitation Services Group / Professor Shadd Maruna – June 2010.
